

The first Jewish family of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael, birthing the kindred monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, reflects deep convictions along with searing conflicts whose profound impact is still with us today. This we know for sure, our basic human make-up of passions and prejudices, loves and hatreds has not changed. We remain subject to their influences in determining our conduct, positively and negatively. While naturally we tend to dwell on the multiple challenges and struggles of contemporary life, there is much we can absorb from those who laid the foundation for the twin components of Jewish identity, faith, and peoplehood.

Abraham and Sarah had the stamina to leave their home in pagan Mesopotamia in search of new beginnings—spiritually, physically, and psychologically. They were not deterred by the cumbersome obstacles such a journey and journeys would entail, sustained by a driving vision of an encounter with a God whose unifying message captured their yearning imagination. Soon they would discover, however, that their newly found breakthrough faith was intertwined with a fragmented reality. The shared tenets and tents in an unknown territory would become the testing ground for lofty ideals and binding values. The Rabbis teach us that the founders' tent in the wilderness of Canaan was open on all sides to allow one and all to enter and be warmly welcomed, finding caring respite and appreciated protection from both hostile humans and adverse elements.

Are we equipped with the capacity to learn from mistakes and chart a new course of conduct and consideration, finally creating Shalom's overarching harmony? The tradition ushered in by our progenitors is an optimistic one, having faith in God as well as us, while sanctifying the precious gift of life. As we enter the portals of a new year may we master from those who shaped us in ways both manifest and concealed, that we may turn hatred into love, violence into vision, pain into promise, adversity into advantage and blemishes into blessings!

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is the founder of Temple Lev Tikvah in Virginia Beach. He is a member of the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission.

#### HONORING LOUIS TESSIER'S DECADES OF SERVICE AT THE DEDICATION OF "LOU TESSIER WAY" AT THE WARREN COUNTY

**HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 10, 2021*

Ms. STEFANIK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Louis Tessier for his decades of service to Lake George and all of Warren County, New York, and to mark the dedication of "Lou Tessier Way" at the Warren County Airport.

Louis Tessier first came to Lake George in the 1970s when he purchased the Four Seasons Hotel. He quickly got involved in the local community and was elected to the Lake George Town Board in 1982. Just two years later, Mr. Tessier was elected as Supervisor of the Board, a position he held until his retirement in 2009. His long list of accomplishments in this role includes overseeing \$500,000 in renovations for the Lake George Town Hall, acquiring the land for Usher Park Beach, and

assisting in building the Scoville Learning Center at Adirondack Community College. In addition to his years of service on the Lake George Town Board, he also served as Chairman of the Board for Warren County's Board of Supervisors, budget officer for Warren County, and a member of the American Legion.

A pilot himself, Louis Tessier was a devoted advocate for the Warren County Airport. He went out of his way to support the staff and assist them whenever they needed help. He put in hours of work to help organize the Adirondack Balloon Festival. In honor of his commitment to the airport and the community it serves, the Warren County Board of Supervisors unanimously decided to rename the entrance road to the airport "Lou Tessier Way."

Mr. Tessier truly embodies the community spirit present throughout the North Country. On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, I would like to thank Mr. Tessier for his decades of service to Lake George and Warren County and congratulate him for this well-deserved recognition.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. VIVIANA MEDELLIN

**HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 10, 2021*

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, it is with a deep sense of gratitude that I rise today to memorialize the significant contributions of Mrs. Viviana Medellin, an individual who went above and beyond to serve our KC Latino community. She poured her heart and soul into the empowerment of Latino voices, leveraging her Chicana roots and producing so many far-reaching programs that will carry her legacy forward while sharing her culture with many within the Greater Kansas City region.

Before her public service, Mrs. Medellin followed her dream of working with renowned cardiologists Dr. G. Hartzler and Dr. Barry Rutherford in the Cardiovascular lab at St. Luke's Hospital. Prior to working in the Cardiovascular lab, she started at St. Luke's as a nursing assistant and eventually retired after nearly 48 years of service and dedication to public health. It was during that 48 years that she met her amazing and loving husband, Richard Medellin, and together raised their children: Monica Holman, Robert A. Frias, Sophia Byers, and Ricardo Medellin.

Viviana not only was committed to public health in Kansas City, but she was also a devout Catholic, as a long-time parishioner of St. Agnes Catholic Church. Having graduated from Redemptorist Catholic High School in 1965, Viviana was charged at an early age to give back. She also served the Altar and Rosary Society and as a member of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle.

It is because of her pursuits to advance the celebration of her Mexican American culture that Viviana served as the President of Azteca de Greater KC and as Vice-President of The Greater Kansas City Hispanic Heritage, advancing several amazing programs over the years. Of those programs, Viviana was a significant contributor to the Fiesta Hispanic celebration that started in 1984 and has been a

beacon of Hispanic celebration and acknowledgement for decades. In addition, Viviana has been a host on Kansas City Community Radio station, KKFI 90.1 FM's Taste of Tejano, where she combined her love of Tejano music and that of sharing her culture through the airwaves. She was certainly an amazing person, sharing her passion for her community with all of Kansas City, and for that she deserves great recognition.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Mrs. Viviana Medellin for the tremendous accomplishments throughout her career and her tireless efforts in providing Kansas City with celebration of the rich Mexican American culture, thriving within our amazing City. Her contributions to our community have made a significant impact on Missouri's Fifth District and I speak on the behalf of the entire district when I say thank you to Viviana.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS. SUSAN "CHERI" CHERYL MAINARD OFNER

**HON. DOUG LAMBORN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 10, 2021*

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Susan "Cheri" Cheryl Mainard Ofner, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, patriot, and friend.

Cheri was born July 27, 1951, in Dallas, Texas to the late Loretta and Aston "Dee" Dale Mainard. She was the oldest of four children, and at an early age, developed a love for sports, her country, and the Lord.

Cheri was a woman of great faith and spent her life dedicated to learning and sharing the Word of God. As a young girl, Cheri's family moved to Houston, and attended Springs Branch Baptist Church, where her mother taught Sunday school.

Cheri attended school as a National Merit Scholar at the University of Texas, where she secured a highly competitive spot on the gymnastics team. It was during gymnastics practice where Cheri met the love of her life, Lee Ofner, in January 1971. The couple's first date was watching Superbowl V, played between the Baltimore Colts and the Dallas Cowboys.

In 1972, Cheri graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance & Accounting, and in 1973 married Lee in a ceremony at her home church in Houston, Texas. A few years later, in 1975, Lee earned a Doctorate in Dental Surgery degree from Baylor College of Dentistry and began his U.S. Navy tour in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

The couple moved back to Dallas after Lee completed his tour with the U.S. Navy. Together with Cheri's degree in business and Lee's doctorate in dental surgery, they established a successful dental practice in 1977. During this time, Cheri and Lee had two children, Jay and Courtney. Cheri was an all-star mom, attending every soccer practice, school musical, ballet, Bible study, etc. She even coached Courtney's gymnastics team.

The Ofners eventually retired from dentistry, and ultimately, found their forever home in 1991 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Cheri and Lee immediately became involved with their new community, joining several Bible